リカチ

The Ice Queen

Rikachi Presents

氷の女王

1

Kodansha Comics

BETSUFURE

Crimson Flower Translations

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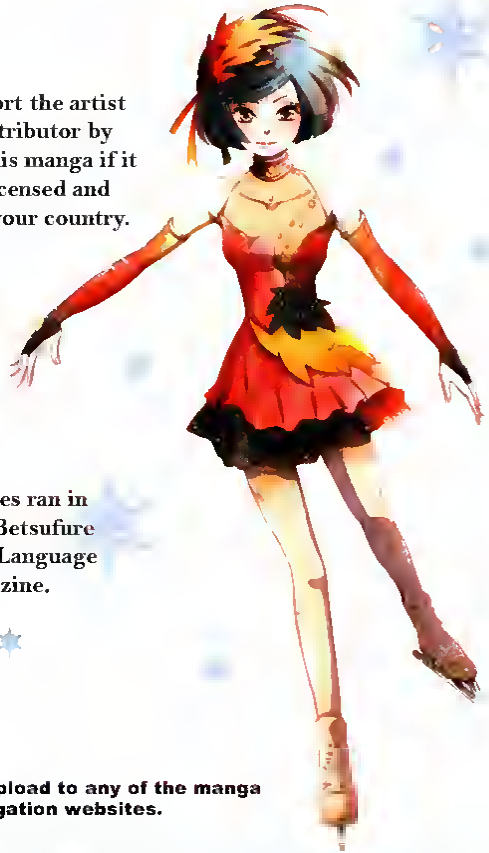

This series ran in monthly Betsufure Japanese Language magazine.

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STEP 6
Minato's Feelings

DID THAT
JUST HAPPEN?
REALLY
HOW ON EARTH SHOULD I REACT AT A TIME LIKE THIS?!

FOR NOW, I'LL BECOME A TURTLE!!
RIGHT THEN, A TURTLE CAME TO MIND
A TURTLE THAT CAN PROTECT ITSELF FROM INTRUDERS
I'LL PRETEND TO BE ASLEEP OR
TUCK
AND SO, UNTIL THE INTRUDER LEFT, I TURTLED AND PRETENDED NOTHING HAPPENED
YOU AS A TURTLE...
Bwuhs!
SO? DID IT ACTUALLY HAPPEN OR NOT?!

That's a lie...
NOTHING HAPPENED, YOU HEAR!! NOTHING AT ALL!! I BLOCKED HIM WHEN HE WAS ONE MILLIMETER AWAY!
BUT IT WAS REALLY CLOSE!
BUT NOTHING HAPPENED, RIGHT?
UH! NO, IT'S NOT GOOD AT ALL!!
AND NOW, IT'S OVER DONE
BUT, WELL, ISN'T IT GOOD THAT HE TRIED?
Uh... right.
THEN, IT'S OVER
NOT EVEN GETTING SYMPATHY WHEN I SAY SOMEONE TRIED TO KISS ME IS...
NO, IT'S BECAUSE IT IS A BIG DEAL!!!
BUT THE TRUTH IS I CAN'T SAY IT. THE MOMENT I OPENED MY MOUTH, IT SEEMED LIKE IT BECAME A BIG DEAL
REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENED, A NEW BOYFRIEND CANDIDATE HAS APPEARED.
What?

HUH?
DID HE SAY HE LIKED ME?
At any rate, I went into turtle mode after
SHE REALLY DOES DO NOTHING BUT SKATE
THAT'S NOT IT
HE JUST SUDDENLY FELT LIKE KISSING ME BECAUSE I WAS ASLEEP
BUT HE WOULDN'T HAVE DONE SOMETHING LIKE THAT IF HE DIDN'T LIKE YOU
HE DIDN'T ASK ME TO GO OUT WITH HIM!
MY POINT IS, IT HAPPENED AND YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT.
DIDN'T LIKE IT...?
IS WHAT OVER?
Eep!
IS IT OVER?

MINATO!
NOTHING! IT WAS NOTHING! I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!!
WHAT AM I GETTING FLUSTERED ABOUT?!
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, DID I?
OR RATHER, DON'T I SOUND LIKE A HUSBAND WHO'S BEEN FOOLING AROUND AT A HOSTESS BAR?
WHIRL
OH, YUUKI
EEP!
OH YEAH, I HAVE TO USE THE REST-ROOM!
LET'S ALL GO!
REST-ROOM.
REST-ROOM.
REST-ROOM.
Nature's been calling
GAPE...

Haah
SOMEHOW I FEEL THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE I CAN RELAX
But why did the two of us have to come here...?
MINATO TACHIBANA, YUUKI SAIKA, AND AKIRA NANAO... ALL OF THEM ARE TOP-NOTCH GUYS.
EVEN FOR A POPULAR GIRL, THEY'RE ALL OUT OF REACH.
Nanao is not interested in me...
I THINK IT'S BETTER TO MAKE THINGS CLEAR QUICKLY
NO, NO.

EVEN THOUGH I'M BEING TOLD TO BE CLEAR...
I'M CONFUSED AND THERE'S A LOT GOING ON RIGHT NOW. IT'S NOT REALLY A PRIORITY RIGHT NOW
BY LETTING THINGS REMAIN UNCLEAR, IT APPEARS THAT YOUR PRIORITY IS TO KEEP ALL OF THE GUYS FOR YOURSELF
UGH, HOW LOW CAN YOU GET!?
HUH?!
THAT'S NOT MY INTENTION!
THE BOYS ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE BEEN ACTING ON THEIR OWN!
YEAH, SO.
BEING POPULAR CAN BE A REAL PAIN SOMETIMES..
WHUMP

YOU'RE AN UGLY HAG WHO CAN ONLY SKATE!
AN UGLY HAG WHO CAN ONLY SKATE?
HUH?
KIWAKO, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT...?
DID YOU HEAR HER? JUST NOW...
SHE SAID I'M GOOD AT SKATING !!
YEAH.
I GUESS SO...
She didn't say "good"!
That caught me off guard.
I'm hopeless, I guess.
I am a heaven sent skater after all.
Heheh!

Has the day when I suffer insults come?!!
Hag... Hag...?
DON'T SWEAT IT, KIWAKO.
IN THIS WORLD, IT'S SAID THAT IT'S THE SLIGHTLY UGLY WHOSE NEEDS ARE THE MOST
NO, NO WORRIES. WOULDN'T IT BE WORSE HEARING SOMETHING LIKE THAT FROM A FRIEND?
HMM... THERE'S NO WAY I'M ACTUALLY AS CUTE AS AN IDOL.
BUT EVEN IF I'M NOT AN IDOL, I THINK MY FACE IS PRETTY AVERAGE
I'm not ugly, am I? I'm normal, right? I do have bitch-face though.
THUMP
A burst of cool sweet flavor

it's an ice chocolate that's in love with you
In the summer-time
with a velvety chill that melts in your mouth
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S NOT AN IDOL, SHE'S AS CUTE AS ONE
IS THERE A REAL DIFFER-ENCE IN OUR LOOKS?!
But even I was in a vacuum cleaner commer-cial...

I GOT THAT INFO FROM NANAO
Was Nanao speaking fondly of her?
OH, NIKA, RIGHT? THE PR PEOPLE WHO SAW HER AT THE COMPETITION TOOK GREAT INTEREST IN HER!
I HEARD IT'S RARE FOR SOMEONE WHO ISN'T FAMOUS OR AN IDOL TO BE IN A COMMERCIAL
YOU'LL BE AROUND NANAO A LOT AT THE ICE SHOW IN JULY. CAN'T YOU ASK HIM ABOUT THINGS THEN?
NANAO... I SEE, MY HEART STILL ACHES A LITTLE...
BUT IT'S A "LIKE" CLOSER TO ADMI-RATION...
THAT'S RIGHT, THE ICE SHOW IN JULY!!!
I'M HAPPY I GET TO SEE HIM.
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HIM SPEAK FONDLY OF HER. BUT

He has the same schedule as you
SAIKA WILL ALSO BE IN THE ICE SHOW.
Ooh?!
Uhh...
BECAUSE I HAVE A PROGRAM IN MIND FOR TWO SINGLE SKATERS TO PERFORM AS A PAIR
JEFFREY WAS THE ONE WHO PUSHED FOR THE RE-PLACEMENT TO COME FROM OUR CLUB, YOU SEE
HE'S A SPECIAL ENTRY AS A REPLACEMENT FOR A SKATER WHO CAN'T PERFORM
FOR THE MOST PART IT'S AN ICE SHOW THAT WELL-KNOWN SKATERS APPEAR IN, SO WHY HIM...?!
I want to do the choreography!
JEF-FREY DIO?!
...

HE'S GOING TO FORM A PAIR WITH ME?!!!
TA DA!
IS WHAT HE SAID.
AND...
GLANCE
I'M ALREADY FIGHTING A TOUGH BATTLE WITH MAIDEN IN LOVE GISELLE, SO A PAIR'S DANCE IS WAY TOO MUCH!!!!
It'll be 1 to 2 minutes and there will be no lifts, so you'll be fine.
THAT DAMNED LOVE-OBSESSED CHOREOGRAPHER!!!
Ughhhh! I feel kinda self-conscious!!

YIKES!
BEING THIS CLOSE BRINGS BACK ALL SORTS OF MEMORIES...
TOO CLOSE!!
GRAB!
!!
KIWAKO...
OH NO, NOT AGAIN!!!

ARE YOU NERVOUS? WHY?
YOUR BODY IS STIFF
Yikes!
BOYS' HANDS
ARE VERY LARGE AND STRONG.
D... Don't make light of me!
Being held closely is no big deal for someone like me, you hear!!
IS IT BECAUSE I REALLY AM A GIRL..?

1F
2F
KIWAKO,
I'M JUST NOW GET-TING THIS...
I DON'T FEEL...
I DIDN'T MEAN WHAT I DID AS A GREETING.

I THINK THIS IS A BIG PROBLEM...
REVULSION...
BUT I GUESS IT'S KINDA GOOD... IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S...
HEY!
IF YOU'RE HEADING OUT, LET'S LEAVE TOGETHER.
ARE YOU GOING TO THE ICE RINK AFTER YOU GO HOME?
YEAH WHAT ABOUT YOU, MINATO?
HMM...
I HAVE TO WORK TODAY

NO, NO. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT I'M READY TO GO OUT WITH MINATO YET.
yeah, yeah.
UH... BUT I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE KITARO.
THE FEELINGS OF GUILT ARE MULTIPLYING...!!!
PERHAPS...
IT'S BABY STEPS.
HOW IS GISELLE COMING ALONG?
WHAT IF MINATO WERE MY PARTNER IN THE PAIR'S DANCE?
IT'S A GRADUAL THING

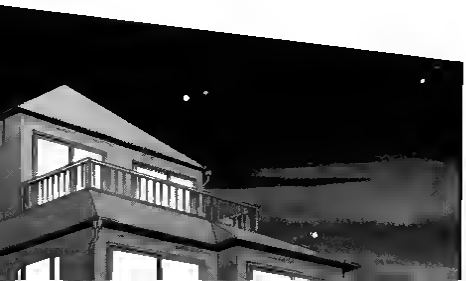
HERE!
LIKE THIS?
Are we doing a folk dance?
YEAH.
HUH? UH,
YEP. AS EXPECTED OF BOYS' HANDS..
GRASPING HIS HAND
It's different than being with Ketarou

HOW LONG ARE WE GONNA DO THIS?
OH, UM, THAT'S ENOUGH.
IT FEELS AWKWARD, BUT SINCE IT'S MINATO IT'S SOME-HOW...
THE TRUTH IS I HAVE TO PERFORM IN A PAIR'S DANCE.
I WAS DOING A LITTLE IMAGINATION TRAINING, OKAY!!
UH, A PAIR'S DANCE?
GASP!
No, no, it's only a 1 to 2-minute performance. It's nothing serious.
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU ALL WORKED UP ABOUT?
No, I'm not worked up! It's no big deal!!!

MY FEELINGS ARE GETTING MORE AND MORE CONFUSING.
HMM..
OUTSIDE OF NANAO, I HAVEN'T CONSIDERED ANY OTHER BOYS.
SPORTS PLAZA
SPORTS PLAZA
Tennis Golf Ice Skate
Oh, geez, my head is spinning!

MY HEART'S FLUTTERING!
AM I REALLY HAPPY?
OR AM I UPSET?
WHICH IS IT?
WH-WHOA!
OH NO,
IT'S LIKE MY EYES ARE SPINNING!!
I'M P-P-POPULAR!
SQUEEZE
I'M SELF-CONSCIOUS AND MY FEET WON'T STAY UNDER ME!!
I FEEL AWKWARD!!!
COMBINATION JUMP
I WAS SHOWING YOU HOW I BECAME GISELLE'S LOVE!!
huff
huff
Just now, you did a triple axel without even trying. You're a scary girl.
KIWAKO, WHAT WAS THAT?
Huh?
That was a waste of a jump!
It's not that kind of love!!
Huh?
Don't jump randomly.

EXPRESSING LOVE IS SO DIFFICULT...



FLASH
FLASH
OH,
IT'S THE CHOCO-LATE IDOL
STEAMY
STEAMY
"Hello, I'm looking forward to seeing you at the ice show in Yokohama "
"I'm going to skate in a pair and I'm worried."
OH MY GOSH, IS THAT GIRL GOING TO SKATE WITH NANAO?!
I'm having stage fright and I'm nervous ...
I kinda want to talk with you about it...

KINDA WANT TO TALK TO HER.
YEAH, I ALSO...
SPORTS PLAZA
Tennis Golf
2F
3F
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR KIWAKO, SHE ISN'T HERE YET!
GLANCE
GLANCE

ACTUALLY, I SAW YOU SKATE
I SAW A VIDEO OF YOU FROM A LONG TIME AGO
The coach had it
Tee-hee!
UH... WELL, YES
You came to walk Kiwako home
We've been working long hours every day, and you're worried!
STAFF ONLY
IT SEEMS THAT SKATING IS NOT FOR ME
OHH? BUT...
YOU HAVE SENSE, YET YOU DON'T SKATE. IT'S A SHAME
YOU SHOULD TAKE UP SKATING AGAIN
YOU DO LIKE SKATING
YOU LIKE IT JUST AS MUCH AS KIWAKO DOES

SINCE THAT'S THE CASE, THEN YOU OUGHT TO STAND ON THE SAME STAGE
IT WOULD BE BEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH KIWAKO THROUGH SKATING SINCE YOU BOTH LIKE IT
YOU OUGHT TO HURRY UP OR YUUKI WILL TAKE HER
HE ALREADY KISSED HER
I saw it happen in the break room
HUH?!
WHEN WAS THAT?
OH, MINATO!! YOU'RE HERE!
KIWAKO, YOU...

YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL ME, DON'T YOU?
HUH?
ABOUT YOU AND SAIKA...
UH...
NO...
THERE'S NOTHING TO SAY
WE AREN'T GOING OUT
I'M GOING HOME.
IT'S DARK OUT, SO GET SOMEONE TO WALK YOU HOME
WAIT A MINUTE... MINATO?
I'M PATHETIC

MINATO...
Here I'm giving these to you. I don't need them♥
Wait a minute!
KIWAKO!
FOR SOME REASON.. I FEEL BAD? DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG? WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

HUH?
YUUKI IS DOING A PRACTICE PERFOR-MANCE
Kitarou?
HE WANTS YOU TO WATCH HIM, SO WHY DON'T YOU GO TAKE A LOOK?
SURE!
TUP!
PAUSE
.....
MINATO...
HURRY UP, KIWAKO!
OH, OKAY!
SPORTS PLA

IT'S BECAUSE HE KISSED HER.
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO BE POPULAR.
UGH,
E
NO,
WHEN YOU SHUT UP AND SKATE, YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL TOO.
I KNOW YOU'RE CUTE,
even though you're foolish.

I'M SO UNCOOL THE WAY I AM NOW!
NO, NO...
I'M NOT THE KIND OF GUY WHO CHASES AFTER GIRLS.
SO MINATO SHOULD SKATE AGAIN.
YOU WOULD SHARE THE SAME STAGE!
WHAT ARE THAT JOCK KIWAKO AND THAT LOVE-OB-SESSED CHOREOG-RAPHER TALKING ABOUT?
EVEN I HAVE CIRCUM-STANCES

AT THIS RATE, I'LL ALWAYS...
...
OH YEAH, THIS...
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
I'M GIVING THESE TO YOU
YOUR FEET ARE 26 CM LIKE MINE RIGHT?♥
THESE CAN'T BE SKATES. THE BOX IS TOO LIGHT AND TOO SMALL
A PAIR OF HIGH HEELS ...
WHAT THE HECK
IS HE THINK-ING?!!!
.....

WOW, THEY FIT PERFECTLY
IT'S HARD TO KEEP MY BALANCE
MY FEET ARE CRAMPING
BUT
THESE ARE JUST WHAT I NEED NOW.
TUP!
THE MUSIC IS A JITTERBUG, YEAH?

THAT'S KITARŌU?!

HIS SKATING
MATCHES THE RHYTHM
THE MUSIC IS LATIN.
FROM NIMBLE MOVES
THE TEMPO IS FAST!
ISN'T HE USUALLY EXPRESS-SION-LESS...?
TO A HIGH JUMP!!!

OH, THE MUSIC CHANGED...
DYNAMICALLY
IT'S THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF THE FIRST HALF'S TEMPO.
INTENSE...
NOW IT'S SLOW?!
IT TRANSI-TIONED TO A CAREFREE MELODY.

OH...
A PASSIONATE EXPRESSION—

MY HEART...
Heh
IS POUNDING.
SUU...

UM.
UM---
ba-bump
ba-bump
ba-bump

I WANT TO MESMERIZE TOGETHER ON THE COLD ICE WITH YOUR PASSION
YEAH,
I HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO
BUT I CAN PROBABLY DO IT
I'VE BEEN WAITING TO SEE THAT KIND OF LOOK ON YOUR FACE.
ICE QUEEN.

End of "The Ice Queen" Chapter 6